

September 2006

ADAMS FSA NEWS -n- VIEWS

Disaster Declaration Announced

USDA Secretary Johanns recently designated Adams County, and an additional 11 Counties in Washington State, under a natural disaster declaration as a result of adverse weather conditions including excessive rainfall, and hail, during the period of April 1st through the present. This designation allows farmers and ranchers meeting eligibility requirements to apply for low interest emergency loans. Eligibility is based on production losses of 30% or greater on at least one crop of economic significance. Producers must also be able to verify that they were unable to obtain credit for the losses at normal terms and conditions elsewhere. Applications for assistance are filed for Adams County producers with the farm loan staff in Ephrata. To inquire about this program, call Everett or Libby, at 754-2463. The final date to apply for this assistance is May 1, 2007. To date, we have received no word of approval of any crop disaster type programs for 2006, or previous year crop losses. In the event that such programs are approved at a later date, we will notify you through newsletters promptly.

County Committee Election Announced

The nomination period for serving on the Adams County Committee ended recently, with one nominee to serve Local Administrative Area LAA #1, which is comprised of the North 1/3 of the County, with boundaries of I-90 on the South, and the Whitman, Lincoln, and Grant County lines on the East, West and North. Greg Galbreath, currently serving on the Committee was nominated to complete a second term on the committee. No other nominations were received; therefore, Greg will appear on the ballot, along with the opportunity for electors to write in the name of other persons willing to serve on the committee if elected.

The election period will be from November 3 – December 4, 2006 with ballots being mailed directly to all eligible voters in LAA #1 in early November. Ballots need to be returned to the FSA office, or be postmarked if mailed, not later than December 4, 2006. Ballots will be counted at the USDA Service Center office, on December 7th, 2006 beginning at 9:00 A.M. The ballot counting is open to anyone who wishes to come watch local government in action.

NAP Deadline and CDP Linkage Requirements

The deadline to purchase Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for the 2007 crop year is fast approaching for perennial grass seed crops, alfalfa seed, alfalfa forage, mint, and native rangeland. September 30th, is the final date to purchase this coverage, which protects 50% of your yield, at 55% of expected price, for a fee of \$100 per crop, not to exceed a total of \$300 per county for all crops covered, nor to exceed \$900 for all crops covered in all counties. Participants in the 2003 and/or 2004 Crop Disaster Program (CDP) who needed NAP coverage for a two year period to meet linkage requirements are reminded not to miss this date. Failure to purchase this coverage, if required as a condition of CDP benefits, will result in refund of ALL CDP funds received; a very stiff penalty for missing this deadline, but one we have no authority to waive. Please do not miss this deadline if you need this linkage, and also, for those who collected CDP on insurable crops such as low quality wheat, remember the linkage applies to insurable crops as well, requiring that "buy-up" coverage be in effect for the successive two years. The deadline for purchase of wheat coverage is September 30, 2006.

Should We Change CRP Managed Grazing Period?

The Adams County Committee previously established the period for using managed grazing of CRP under the managed haying and grazing provisions as June 1st through September 30th, yearly. Other grazing periods which have been approved by the Washington State FSA committee for use on a county basis include a split period of October 1st through November 30th, and followed by a second approved period from January 1st through February 28th; or a later over winter period with no interruption, beginning November 1st, and concluding February 28th. Grazing is allowed under managed grazing provisions once each 4 years, with a reduction in annual rental payment for the year in which grazing is conducted.

The County Committee is seeking the input of livestock operators in selection of the appropriate period for use in the 2007 and future years. If you have opinions on which period would be most beneficial in your operation, please contact Chris or Jullie to weigh in. A decision to change or stay at our current period will be made during the next Committee meeting.

DCP Advances Will Be Smaller in 2007

Signup for the 2007 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) will begin on October 2nd, and will run through June 1st, 2007, with one significant change from previous year's programs. For 2007, congress enacted legislation which will reduce the size of advance payments from 50% to 22%, with the 78% balance to be paid as a final payment in October of 2007. October is a very busy month with the issuance of both final 2006 DCP payments, and 2006 CRP annual rental payments. Therefore, requests to complete 2007 DCP signup will be by appointment only, and subject to available staff. We anticipate having full staffing available for DCP appointments by the last week of October. To schedule an appointment, call Angela.

Adams County FSA

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Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

County Committee

Randy Franz
Greg Galbreath
Leroy Watson Jr.
Elizabeth Lyle

Next COC Meeting

September 28, 2006

Office Staff

Chris Holt, CED
Rae Ann Telecky, PT
Jullie Cain, PT
Angela Melcher, PT
Karin Talkington, PT
Mike Schrag, (temp. field PT)
Julie Bittick, (temp. PT)

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EQIP Signup Underway for NRCS

Producers interested in completing conservation related measures on farms and ranches under the 2007 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) may file applications for participation with the NRCS office serving their operation beginning now, and continuing through November 17th, 2006. EQIP is a two step process. Applications must be filed by the deadline; after the initial application is in place, producers will be contacted to meet with NRCS staff to complete an in depth review of the practices available and to provide data specific to their farming or ranching operation for ranking of applications. To get additional information on EQIP, or to complete an application, producers in the Adams Conservation district can contact NRCS at the Ritzville Service center, 509-659-1761; producers in the Warden and Othello Conservation districts should contact NRCS at the Ephrata Service center, 509-754-2463.

CRP Weed Questions and (some) Answers

Producers are asking questions about the timing of required weed control on CRP contracts, and whether “no news” is considered good news with respect to notification from our office on the need to control weeds on CRP this season. A brief explanation of our process to date is helpful in answering these questions. To date, our office is approximately 75% of the way through CRP-REX field inspections. We plan to have all field inspections completed by November 1st. Our process has been to send one of three notifications to contract operators upon completion of an inspection.

Producers with acceptable grass stands, and no weed problems requiring additional treatment are sent a letter containing CRP-1F contracts to complete the extension of their contracts. Once all signatures are returned on the CRP-1F, with any associated eligibility documents (WDFW Habitat Agreement extensions if needed and CCC-526 Adjusted Gross Income certification) you are approved for CRP-REX.

A second category of contracts are ones where grass has been determined to be adequate, but some additional action is required, such as either spot, or whole field weed control, control of noxious weeds in specific areas, or a harrowing operation to improve grass vigor and stand quality. Those contracts receive a letter specifying the additional action needed, and ask that you notify us when the action is completed. We call this a “conditional certification” letter, meaning that once you have completed the required actions, we will consider the contract to meet certification requirements, and will then send you the CRP-1F contract and any other necessary eligibility documents, to complete your CRP-REX extension.

The final letters we send out are on contracts where some or all of the grass has been determined failed. In those letters, you are instructed to provide additional information on the efforts you have made to establish grass over the contract term, and are given the opportunity to meet with the County Committee informally, as part of the process for them making a determination if the contract is to be considered in compliance, or out of compliance (subject to assessment of a standard payment reduction). This determination, and the age of the contract also has a bearing on whether the CRP-REX can be approved in conjunction with the completion of a revised conservation plan to get the grass established, or whether the CRP contract is to be terminated with respect to the failed acreage, either with, or without refund of all previous payments received.

So, in answer to the questions we are most asked;

- No news is neither good news, nor bad news; it only means we have not yet completed the inspection on your contract. Once your contract is reviewed, (by November 1st) you will receive one of the three types of notification described above.
- On weed and stand improvements called for in your conditional certification letters, we are asking that you complete these actions as soon as possible, but October 1 is not a deadline for completion. However, be advised, we do prioritize the payment of annual CRP rental payments to a degree, issuing payments first to those contracts where we do not have pending compliance issues such as weed control to consider. Therefore, if you received either a “conditional certification” letter, or one where we have determined failed acreage, and you have not yet done the required action, or provided information needed for the County Committee to complete their determinations, those CRP payments will be processed later in the month of October, as later as after the October Committee meeting on the 26th potentially if a committee determination is needed. Timely completion of required actions and reporting to FSA when complete will speed annual rental payments.
- Finally, most CRP stands are meeting CRP-REX requirements; it is also true however to state that a majority of our CRP contracts have had some issues, such as either limited, up to and including whole field in some instances, weed control/stand enhancement requiring to be done prior to acceptance for CRP-REX, hopefully answering the most asked question; “Am I the only one working on weed control, or will my neighbor have to control his weeds too?” Glad you asked.